

MEMO TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Greg Ossont, Director  
Planning and Code Administration

DATE: March 28, 2006

SUBJECT: Olde Towne Central Business District Design Guidelines

As discussed during the regular meeting on March 22, 2006, staff has attached a copy of the Olde Towne Central Business District Guidelines for your review. The guidelines were adopted by resolution of the Mayor and City Council in March 1998.

For your review, staff has shaded many sections of the guidelines for various reasons. In some cases, the guidelines may no longer be relevant (i.e. references to the Olde Towne Central Business District, Inc.), the specific materials listed may limit the use of an otherwise acceptable material or the guidelines may be in direct conflict with other applicable codes, regulation or ordinances (i.e. parking ticket fines).

Staff is not recommending any changes or modifications to the document at this time. Rather, the guidelines are simply being provided to the Commission for your review and as a discussion topic during the regular meeting on April 5, 2006.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at 301-258-6330 or [gossont@gaithersburgmd.gov](mailto:gossont@gaithersburgmd.gov)

Enclosure

Distribution:  
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## OLDE TOWNE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

### BUILDING WALLS

#### MATERIALS

1. **Walls** shall be clad in smooth cut cedar shingles, wood clapboard, wood beaded siding, hardboard siding, stucco or brick.
2. **Exposed foundation walls** shall be brick, stone or parged block. Painted poured concrete may be used subject to the approval of The Olde Towne Central Business District, Inc.

#### METHODS

1. **Walls** of more than one material shall only change material along a horizontal line (not a vertical or diagonal line) and the heavier material shall always go beneath the lighter material.
2. **Wood clapboard and wood siding** shall be painted.
3. **Brick** shall be in a horizontal running bond pattern.
4. **Stucco** shall be rough in texture, to match the old First National Bank Building at Diamond and Summit Avenues.
5. **Poured concrete** shall have a smooth finish.
6. **Trim** is required where there is a change in material or a change in plane.

### ELEMENTS

#### MATERIALS

1. **Porches** shall be wood, or faced with brick or stone.
2. **Stoops** shall be brick or stone. Poured concrete may be used subject to the approval of the Governing Body. Stoops at secondary entrances may be wood.
3. **Posts, columns, and railings** shall be wood, steel or wrought iron.
4. **Piers and arches** shall be brick or stone.
5. **Chimney enclosures** shall be brick, stone or stucco.

#### METHODS

1. **Wood** shall be painted or stained with an opaque or semi-solid stain, except walking surfaces which may be unfinished.
2. **Wood posts** shall be no less than 6" by 6".
3. **Piers** shall be no less than 12" wide and 8" thick.
4. **Arches** shall be no less than 8u thick.
5. **Columns, pilasters, etc.,** of the Tuscan or Doric orders shall be as prescribed by The American Vignola. .

6. Spaces between **spindles and balusters** shall not exceed 2-1/2".
7. **Balconies** shall extend beyond the face of the wall a no more than 4' and shall be supported by exposed beams or brackets.
8. The **undercroft of porches** shall be enclosed with masonry or shall be skirted by lattice. .
9. **Decks** may be placed only on rear elevations.

## ROOFS

### MATERIALS

1. **Visible roofs** shall be galvanized metal standing seam, copper, wood shakes, natural slate or asphalt shingles subject to the approval of The Olde Towne Central Business District, Inc.
2. **Gutters** shall be copper, steel or aluminum.

### METHODS

1. **Roofs** shall be simple, symmetrically pitched, and in the configuration of gables and hips. The pitch shall be between 6:12 and 14:12.
2. **Shed roofs** shall be permitted when the ridge is attached to an exterior wall. The pitch shall be between 3:12 and 14:12.
3. **Flat roofs** shall be permitted only when occupied and edged by a railing or parapet wall.
4. **Gable ends** shall have profile trim.
5. **Skylights and solar panels** may be placed on rear elevations or on side elevations if not visually prominent.
6. **Roofs** built of steel standing seam shall be painted or galvanized.
7. Asphalt shingles shall be black or dark grey and subject to the approval of The Olde Towne Central Business District, Inc.
8. **Copper** shall be allowed to age naturally.

## OPENINGS

### MATERIALS

1. **Windows** shall be wood, vinyl clad wood or ESP aluminum.
2. **Glass** shall be clear, except stained glass, art glass, and frosted glass of not more than 10 square feet. .
3. **Doors** shall be wood, embossed steel or fiberglass with a wood veneer, and glass.
4. **Doors facing a street** shall be hinged.

### METHODS

1. **Windows and window lites** shall be no more squat than square.

2. **Windows** shall be rectangular, except that a window may be Circular, semicircular, hexagonal, or octagonal in shape, but only one such window may placed on each elevation.
3. **Bay windows facing a street** shall extend to the ground or be structurally supported by brackets.
4. **Lintels** shall extend beyond the opening a dimension equal to the height of the lintel.
5. **Muntins**, if provided, shall be real or mounted on the exterior surface.
6. **Single glass panes** in residences shall be no larger than 20 S.F..
7. **Total fenestration** (rough openings) on the front elevation shall not exceed 35% of the total surface area. .
8. **Two windows** in the same rough opening shall be separated by a minimum. 4" post.
9. **Windows** shall be no closer than 2' to the comers of the building.
10. **Shutters** shall be shaped, sized and proportioned to the window they serve.
11. **Shutters** shall be functional or provided with shutter dogs and mounted as if hinged to the window frame.
12. **Doors**, including **garage doors**, shall have glass, raised panels or both.
13. **Storm doors and screen doors** shall be full view and free of decorative trim.
14. **Garage doors facing a street** shall not exceed 8' in height or 9' in width.

## COMMERICAL STOREFRONTS

### MATERIALS

1. **Commercial storefronts** may be, in addition to door materials previously stated, aluminum.
2. **Signs** shall be wood or enameled steel.
3. **Awnings** shall be built of a metal structure covered with canvas or synthetic canvas.
4. **Outside tables, chairs & benches** shall be wood or metal.

### METHODS

1. **Storefronts** shall be designed individually.
2. **The storefront, doors, awnings and signage** shall be a unified design.
3. **The storefront** should be detailed while the rest of the building should be simple.
4. **Doors** shall be recessed a minimum of 3' and located near the center of the storefront, except at comers.
5. **Storefront glazing** shall be a minimum of 75% of the first floor front elevation.
6. **Glass** shall be clear and frames should be wood.
7. **A single external sign** may be applied flush with the elevation at each floor level. The sign shall be a maximum of 24" In height by any length. Signs may contain multiple individual signs which refer to a tenant of the building. .
8. **A single external blade sign** may be hung below the second floor window sill perpendicular to the building. These signs may extend up to 4' from the building and may be a max. of 1.5 feet In height.

9. **Blade signs greater than 8' in height** shall be mounted above the storefront perpendicular to the building. These signs may extend up to 4' from the building and may extend as high as the lintels on the top floor.
10. **Signs** shall be externally lit.
11. **Neon signs** of no greater than 4 S.F. are permitted Inside storefronts
12. **Address numbers** shall be a maximum of 8" in height. The quantity & location shall be as required by the Post Office.
13. **Awnings** shall be permitted to encroach the full width of the sidewalk.
14. **Awnings** shall be rectangular in shape with straight edges. Awnings may have side panels but shall not have a bottom (soffit) panel. Awnings shall not be backlit.
15. **Awnings** shall be within reach at the drip edge.
16. **The vertical drip of an awning** may be stenciled with signage a maximum of 8" in height.
17. Street elevations of **corner buildings** shall be illuminated.

## **MERCHANDISING**

1. **Storefront displays** shall be illuminated by halogen lighting.
2. **Store lights** shall be activated at 60% capacity until 10 PM, emphasis should be on window display and back wall.
3. **Window displays** shall not have backdrops. Displays throughout the store shall be designed to be seen through the storefront.
4. **Signage on glass** shall be vinyl cutout letters (not posters nor handwritten).
5. **Merchandise** in the storefront and the back wall shall be displayed in a coarse grain (repetitively) to be legible from the sidewalk.
6. **Merchandise** shall be displayed, when possible on tables (not shelves or racks) and associated with life-style artifacts (flannel plaid with canoe oars).
7. **Name brand merchandise** should be promoted with signs.
8. **Shelves** shall be full but not crowded.
9. **The Cash Register** shall be as far to the rear of the store as feasible.
10. **A selection of merchandise** may be displayed outside the storefront.

## **MAINTENANCE**

1. **Sidewalks** shall be swept twice daily and machine-scrubbed and power-washed weekly.
2. **Doors** shall be washed daily and windows weekly.
3. **Painting** shall occur as often as necessary to conceal scuffing.

## **MANNERS**

1. Avoid signs with **negative messages** ("No Returns" or "You Break It. You Buy It").
2. **Greet the customer** ("Good Morning" or "Thank you for coming to our store").
3. **Parking tickets** shall carry a light fine (a slap on the wrist, not punishment) and shall provide a grace period for immediate payment.

## GARDENS

### MATERIALS

1. **Fences & gates** shall be wood pickets, lattice, or boards, steel, wrought iron or ESP aluminum.
2. **Garden walls** shall be brick or stone.
3. **Retaining walls** shall be brick or stone except those in rear yards which may be poured concrete or pressure treated wood.
4. **Walks and paths** shall be brick, stone, slate, or concrete pavers.

### METHODS

1. **Terminal posts in fences** (corners, openings; ends, etc.) shall be thicker and taller than other posts.
2. **Fences, walls and hedges** along streets, sidewalk, parks, etc., shall be between waist and chest height (the applicant's height). .'
3. **Wood fences** built of wood shall be painted white, or stained white with an opaque stain.
4. **Steel or wrought iron fences** shall be painted black or dark green.
5. **Brick walls** shall be a minimum of 8" thick and capped. The cap shall overhang a minimum of 1/2".
6. **Retaining walls** shall be between knee and chest high (the applicant's height).
7. **Poured concrete** shall have a smooth finish.
8. **Patios** may be placed only on rear elevations.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### MATERIALS

1. **Variances** may be granted by on the basis of architectural merit by The Olde Towne Central Business District, Inc.
2. **Properties and Improvements** shall conform to the *intention*, not the "letter," of The Architectural Regulations.
3. The following **shall be located in rear yards**: clotheslines, HV AC equipment, meters, solar panels, antennas, satellite dishes, garbage cans, play equipment, swimming pools (except those of the inflatable variety), etc.
4. The following **shall not be permitted**: penalized materials, copper anodized aluminum.
5. **Exterior light fixtures** shall be compatible with the style of the building.